## In the Matter Of:

Department of Natural Resources & Environmental Control Hearing

NORMAN SINGER SUBAQUEOUS LANDS PERMIT APPLICATION

June 16, 2021



## Norman Singer Subaqueous Lands Permit Application - June 16, 2021

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3 1 MS. NEWMAN: Good evening, everyone. I believe everyone is now 2 connected and ready to go, so we will begin 3 the virtual public hearing. 4 I want to thank you all for your 5 time for connecting with us today. The date 6 is Wednesday, June 16, 2021. 7 8 We are here this evening to provide a virtual hearing platform for the State of 9 10 Delaware's Department of Natural Resources 11 and Environmental Control to conduct its 12 public hearing on the subaqueous lands permit 13 application submitted by Norman Singer to install a 3-foot wide by 10-foot long 14 gangway, a 6-foot wide by 5-foot long 15 floating pier, and a 6-foot wide by 10-foot 16 17 long floating dock, revised from the original 18 proposed application to install a 3-foot wide by 10-foot long gangway and a 10-foot wide by 19 10-foot long floating dock in Lake Comegys at 20 135 Chesapeake Street, Dewey Beach, Sussex 21 County, Delaware. 22 23 My name is Theresa Newman, and 24 Secretary Garvin has appointed me to serve as

4 1 the hearing officer for tonight's formal proceeding. 2 There have been changes made to 3 DNREC's standard hearing protocols, 4 necessitated by Delaware's ongoing State of 5 Emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic. 6 First and foremost, this hearing is 7 8 being conducted virtually. Staff is not all 9 together in the same room. Everyone is 10 participating independently at their own 11 respective locations. 12 While there is no sign-in sheet to 13 document physical attendance tonight, WebEx does generate a list of those that are 14 virtually present so that the Department can 15 have a record of those who have 16 17 electronically joined this event. 18 At the conclusion of these introductory remarks, I will be turning the 19 hearing over to the Department staff and then 20 to the Applicant to provide a formal 21 presentation for the benefit of the hearing 22 23 record being generated for the matter before 24 us tonight.

Once the presentations conclude, those persons who have preregistered prior to 12:00 p.m. today will be acknowledged and provided an opportunity to offer comment on the proposed application in alignment with DNREC's standard comment protocols.

There is a court reporter virtually present who will prepare a verbatim transcript of the hearing pursuant to the statutory requirement for DNREC to have the same prepared. And, as always, that transcript will be posted on the hearing web-page dedicated to this matter as soon as it is received.

In addition, I would encourage those who are attending tonight's hearing to also visit the hearing web-page dedicated to this matter for additional details concerning the proposed application submitted by Mr. Singer.

The hearing web-page can be found online under the Administrative Law Section of DNREC's website that will be listed at the conclusion of the hearing tonight.

6 1 Before we begin the presentations, please be advised of the following protocols 2 that remain in place for all DNREC public 3 hearings: 4 All comment received must be 5 limited solely to the subject matter for 6 tonight's hearing. 7 8 All comments pertinent to the subject matter of this virtual hearing will 9 10 be incorporated into the record being 11 generated in this matter. 12 In order to ensure that everyone who wishes to offer comment for the 13 14 Secretary's consideration is accommodated, the record in this matter shall remain open 15 following tonight's proceeding through 16 17 Thursday, July 1, 2021. 18 There is only one authentic record of this formal proceeding tonight, and it is 19 the official court reporter's verbatim 20 transcript. 21 22 The statutory purpose of tonight's 23 hearing is to build a record with regard to 24 the proposed application before us. A record

7 1 consisting of tonight's hearing transcript, all written comments, all exhibits, and 2 eventually the Hearing Officer's Report will 3 be reviewed by Secretary Garvin. 4 The Secretary will ultimately issue 5 an order following that review process 6 containing his decision on this matter and 7 8 the reasons therefor. 9 Per DNREC's standard hearing 10 protocols, there will be no Q and A or chat session permitted during the hearing. Those 11 12 who have preregistered to offer verbal comment will be acknowledged to speak at the 13 conclusion of the presentation portion of 14 tonight's proceedings. 15 Additional instructions with regard 16 17 to offering of verbal comment tonight will be 18 provided at that time. 19 It is important to note that no 20 decision has already been made by the Department, nor will any decision be made 21 22 tonight with regard to the proposed 23 application. 24 As previously stated, DNREC wishes

to ensure that everyone is enabled to offer their comment for inclusion into the record being generated in this matter. Therefore, the record will remain open through Thursday, July 1, 2021 so that the public may offer written comment, should they wish to do so.

Comments may be submitted through a comment web form on the hearing web-page, via e-mail to DNRECHearingComments@Delaware.gov, or via the U.S. Postal Services at the physical address for DNREC indicated on the hearing web-page and/or the public notices previously issued in this matter.

Written comments to DNREC may not be submitted using social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube or text messaging.

Please remember that all comment received either through USPS or via electric mechanisms noted just now, as long as received by the Department on or before July 1st, will bear the exact same weight and will be considered equally by the Secretary prior to making his final decision in this matter.

		9
1	Lastly, the ultimate decision	
2	regarding this matter is made by DNREC	
3	Secretary Garvin. This formal proceeding	
4	tonight acts as a mechanism to enable the	
5	Department to thoroughly vet the application	
6	matter to the public and to let the public	
7	know the various ways to which comment may be	
8	submitted for Secretary Garvin's	
9	consideration if so desired.	
10	I will now hand it over to	
11	Mrs. Bobola with the Division of Water to	
12	provide the Department's presentation.	
13	Ms. Bobola, if you are speaking,	
14	you are muted.	
15	MS. BOBOLA: Thank you.	
16	MS. NEWMAN: You are welcome.	
17	MS. BOBOLA: My name is Rebecca	
18	Bobola. I'm an environmental scientist with	
19	the Wetlands and Subaqueous Lands Section of	
20	DNREC.	
21	And tonight I will present	
22	Mr. Norman Singer's application for proposed	
23	docking structure.	
24	On March 13 of 2020, Governor	

10 1 Carney declared a state of emergency due to the public health threat of COVID-19. 2 order to prevent the community transmission 3 of COVID-19, the Governor's state of 4 emergency declaration ordered all public 5 meetings of the Executive Branch public 6 bodies governed by 29 Delaware C10001 to be 7 8 conducted electronically either by means of telephone conference call or videoconference 9 10 call to prevent unnecessary public 11 gatherings. 12 The purpose of tonight's hearing is 13 to provide the public an opportunity to 14 comment on Mr. Norman Singer's application to construct and utilize a residential gangway, 15 floating pier, and floating dock attached to 16 17 an existing bulkhead. Mr. Singer's 18 application is for a subaqueous lands permit. Visible here is the project 19 location as a Zoom dot aerial, the yellow 20 star indicating the proposed project location 21 22 on Lake Comegys. 23 There is a closer aerial image of 24 the specific tax parcel of the proposed

project location located at 135 Chesapeake

Street, Dewey Beach, Sussex County, Delaware.

The parcel is highlighted in yellow.

This application was put on public notice, a 20-day public notice period published in the Delaware State News and the News Journal from May 27, 2020 to June 16, 2020.

The Wetlands and Subaqueous Lands Section received eight written comments in objection.

This visual here is the initial project overview, which included installing a 3-foot wide by 10-foot long gangway and installing a 10-foot wide by 10-foot long floating platform. The images here are the plan view and the section view of the proposed, initial proposed structure.

The applicant submitted the revised project overview. This is comprised of installing a 3-foot wide by 10-foot long gangway, installing a 40-inch wide by 5-foot long floating pier, and installing a 6-foot wide by 10-foot long floating dock. The

image here is of the plan view of the revised project overview.

As part of the regulatory review of this application as submitted, a minimization request was made as well as a request for a representation of the conservation easement on Lake Comegys represented on the applicant's property survey.

The image here depicts the conservation easement as it pertains to Mr. Singer's parcel.

On this slide, not only is the conservation easement visible on Mr. Singer's parcel, but also the proposed dock location relative to the conservation easement as well as the existing bulkhead.

This concludes my presentation of Mr. Norman Singer's application. We will be accepting comments on this matter through July 1, 2021, and comments may be submitted via the three modes visible on this slide.

Theresa, would you like me to introduce the exhibits at this time?

MS. NEWMAN: Yes.

		13
1	MS. BOBOLA: Exhibit 1 is the	
2	Governor's State of Emergency proclamation	
3	and news release authorizing the public	
4	bodies to meet electronically.	
5	Exhibit 2 are the state law and	
6	state regulations pertaining to subaqueous	
7	lands.	
8	Exhibit 3 is the original permit	
9	application.	
LO	Exhibit 4 is the revised plans.	
11	Exhibit 5 is the original public	
L2	notice as it appeared in the Delaware State	
13	News and in the News Journal.	
L4	Exhibit 6 is the public hearing	
15	notice as it appeared in the Delaware State	
L6	News and in the News Journal and as it	
L7	appears on the DNREC website and on the State	
18	Public Meeting Calendar.	
L9	Exhibit 7 is the DNREC public	
20	hearing presentation I just presented.	
21	And Exhibit 8 are the comments	
22	received during the original public notice	
23	period.	
24	MS. NEWMAN: Thank you,	

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14
 1
          Mrs. Bobola. I have received the exhibits as
 2
          you just detailed prior to the hearing
          electronically, and I hereby mark those
 3
          Exhibits 1 through 8, as Department's
 4
          Exhibits 1 through 8.
 5
                    Does that complete your
 6
          presentation, Ms. Bobola?
 7
 8
                    MS. BOBOLA: It does.
 9
                    MS. NEWMAN: Thank you. We will
10
          now move on to Mr. Singer's portion of the
11
          presentation.
12
                    Mr. Singer, I'm aware that you
13
          don't have a Power Point presentation but you
14
          would like to give a verbal presentation.
          that correct?
15
                    MR. SINGER: That is correct.
16
17
                    MS. NEWMAN: Okay. You may begin.
                    MR. SINGER: Thank you. I first
18
          want to thank DNREC and specifically Rebecca
19
          Bobola for her cooperation in the work that
20
          is and has been conducted with this
21
22
          application.
23
                    I filed the application back in
24
          April of 2020 with the help of our dock
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consultant. And we designed the dock so that there would be no impact on the conservation easement and no impact on the lake.

I will be addressing the conservation easement specifically shortly. But I do want to say that this issue of approval of the application is going to be governed by applicable state law and regulation.

It is not a public referendum on whether people like or dislike docks or whether they like or dislike this particular dock.

This is not a popularity vote on those issues. This is a determination to be made by DNREC as to whether the application violates the easement or whether the application, if granted, would have a significant negative impact on the lake.

And those will be the decisions that DNREC will be making.

And, again, these decisions will be based on not guesswork or speculation, but on credible evidence and conclusions which DNREC

can make.

The determination of whether the application violates the easement will be dependent upon the language of the easement, itself, and the applicability of that easement to the proposed dock.

I have read the eight comments made by certain residents in the Cottage Lane Condominiums, as well as a neighbor and the Lake Association. I am familiar with what they have to say.

And I can say that they have not cited any legal basis why the application should not be granted and have not even referenced the easement.

And these are people who currently have docks. There are currently three docks in the lake which currently exist without objection from anybody, the conclusion of which can be that they do not negatively impact the lake; so we can certainly establish quickly that simply putting a dock in the lake is not a negative for the lake.

We also know that the law does not

prohibit docks in this lake. There is no ordinance, there is no regulation, there is nothing that says you cannot have a dock in the lake and, therefore, this application somehow violates that law.

So, again, the issue goes back to this conservation easement which has been recorded against my property, and that is what really is the determining factor here.

This easement was signed by the

Delaware Department of Transportation

primarily because it was connected with a

right-of-way over Lake Drive, which was

adjacent to the lake. It was signed 13 years

ago.

And the easement document primarily sets forth its intention, which is to prohibit certain activities which are set forth in the document, specifically paragraph three, regarding the easement.

As Ms. Bobola presented, we had a survey done to determine the exact width of this easement, and it was determined by the surveyor, which is now an exhibit before the

board, that the easement is 5 feet wide running from my bulkhead to the lake.

of the seven listed prohibited activities, one of the activities which would be pertinent here is the construction of a structure in the easement in this five feet. So when we did the original application, we took this into account by placing a gangway over the easement so that there would be no interference with any vegetation in the easement or with anything else in the easement. That was the purpose for the design.

There is no intention here to disturb anything in the easement, to remove anything in the easement.

In addition to the original plans that were submitted, in light of the eight comments that were filed, we determined to reduce the size of both the adjoining gangway and the dock, itself, basically reduce the dimensions by 50 percent, so that the total length of the structure will extend 11 feet from the 5-foot easement.

This is less than any existing dock currently in the lake. So it will be the smallest dock in the lake. It will be a dock that does not require the driving of any pilings into the lakebed. It's going to be affixed to the lake bed by poles, which will be stamped into the lakebed. The amount of construction will be minimal. And it will be floating so that it does not impact the bottom of the lake.

So what does the current design do?
Well, first of all, it avoids any possible
interference with the easement and,
therefore, any possible violation of the
easement.

So no claim can be made that this design is somehow a violation of the easement and is, therefore, prohibited.

Secondly, it preserves the lake to the greatest extent possible by minimizing any impact, as I have described.

And, lastly, by reducing the dimensions of the lake, what we have done is made it as small as reasonably possible but

still lessening any possible impact that could have. And, again, it would be the smallest of any of the existing docks.

Nothing has been presented that I have seen to DNREC which shows any interference with the easement or shows any negative impact to the lake or shows any negative impact to wildlife or shows any violation of any law or of any state requirement.

As I said before, this is not a beauty contest. We are not here for people to complain that they don't like something. We are here to determine the application of a required document, the applicability of the document, and how that document pertains to what is being proposed.

And Rebecca Bobola, in her research, focused on that issue, developed a record with respect to what is occurring here, which would provide DNREC the necessary basis in which to grant the application.

As I said before, the law does not permit decisions based on morality. The law

21 1 requires compliance by the applicant. have fully complied. We believe the 2 application should be graduated. Thank you 3 very much. 4 MS. NEWMAN: Thank you, Mr. Singer. 5 I just wanted to state for the record that 6 you do not have any documents that you would 7 8 like to submit as a part of the record for tonight's hearing; is that correct? 9 10 MR. SINGER: That is correct. 11 MS. NEWMAN: Okay. Because the 12 record is open till July 1, 2021, you are able to submit any additional documents prior 13 to the record closing out on that date. 14 We will now move forward, though, 15 with the public comment portion of tonight's 16 17 hearing. 18 Now that the presentations have concluded, we will turn our attention to 19 those who have preregistered for the 20 opportunity to offer verbal comment at 21 tonight's hearing. 22 23 Per the protocols set forth on 24 DNREC's public hearing web-page, those

wishing to offer verbal comment during the virtual hearing must have preregistered with DNREC no later than noon the day of the hearing. The order of those comments tonight were established as a result of DNREC's preregistration process.

All commenters must adhere to the Department's protocols with regard to offering verbal comment, including making their comments as concise as possible, respecting the three-minute time limit, and limiting their comments to the subject matter of this hearing.

To assist the commenters with regards to the amount of time they have, there is a visual timer that has appeared on the screen that will count down three minutes. When it is the speaker's turn to comment, the speaker's audio will be unmuted, their identity will be confirmed, and the timer will begin.

At the end of the three minutes, the speaker's audio will be automatically placed back on mute, and we will move forward

with the next person to be acknowledged to offer comment.

There will be no yielding of time from one commenter to another. Please note that there is no live video feed of the commenters, as they will provide a comment by audio only.

All comments will be transcribed by the court reporter and thereby incorporated into the hearing record.

If the speaker is not able to finish their comments within the three-minute time allotted, the Department encourages you to submit the completed comment in writing no later than July 1st. No commenter will be granted more than three minutes of time to speak for any reason.

There are nine registered commenters that will be called upon in the following order:

First to speak will be Sallie

Forman; second, Mark Betchkal; third, Michael

Baxter; fourth, David Jasinski; fifth, Tony

Burns; sixth, Ricky Hardy; seventh, Peggy

24 1 Eddens; eighth, Greg Eddens; and lastly, ninth, Michael Boyd. 2 With that being said, may I have 3 Sallie Forman, please, unmuted? Please state 4 your name and if you are representing anyone 5 for the record, and then you may begin your 6 7 comments. MS. FORMAN: Thank you, Rachel. 8 Good evening. And thank you all for this 9 10 opportunity to speak. I am Sallie Forman, 11 President and Founder of Save Our Lakes 12 Alliance, a non-profit organization with a mission to protect, restore, and maintain 13 Lake Comegys, Silver Lake, and Lake Gerard. 14 We provided the research that led 15 to the state acknowledging its ownership of 16 17 Silver Lake and Lake Comegys. Currently, a 18 management plan is being developed for these 19 lakes. WSLS requires applications to be 20 complete. Mr. Singer's application is not 21 22 complete. 23 Furthermore, because the 24 application, which was filed in April of

		25
1	2020, did not provide a scaled plan view and	
2	cross-section view of his plans as required,	
3	so it is difficult to determine the	
4	following:	
5	What is the impact of public and	
6	private subaqueous lands?	
7	What are the accurate dimensions in	
8	relationship to adjacent property lines?	
9	What is the location of the	
10	high-water line?	
11	What are the depths of water in the	
12	area of the proposed project?	
13	Where is the location of property	
14	corners and lines, wetlands and aquatic	
15	habitats in and around the proposed project?	
16	What is the specific location of	
17	the proposed structures to the adjacent	
18	owners and subaqueous lands?	
19	Does it violate the conditions of	
20	the 5-foot conservation easement?	
21	And what is the relationship of the	
22	gangway to that easement?	
23	Other deficiencies include names	
24	and addresses for property owners within a	

thousand-foot radius of the property are not provided.

The applicant states that he has not applied for a permit for the Army Corps of Engineers, which may be required, as Lake Comegys is a federally regulated water of the United States, which does apply to the adjoining Silver Lake.

The pier and dock 5-foot width exceeds the 4-foot width normally approved by WSLS. We believe a subaqueous land lease is required for a portion of the project that is in subaqueous lands, which is not addressed in the application.

We would respectfully request the Singer application be denied, as it does not meet requirements set forth by WSLS.

DNREC states, "Both public and private wetlands are protected by Federal and State laws because of their exceptional value to society. Maintaining wetlands functions is essential to protecting the public."

The application, as presented, does not consider these standards that protect the

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1	Lake Comegys, its abundance of wildlife, and	
2	the public interest.	
3	MS. NEWMAN: Does this conclude	
4	your comment, Ms. Forman?	
5	MS. FORMAN: Yes, it does.	
6	MS. NEWMAN: We will move on to	
7	Mark Betchkal. May I have Mark Betchkal	
8	unmuted? Mr. Betchkal. Mr. Betchkal?	
9	Ms. Mohammed, I just want to confirm whether	
10	or not Mr. Betchkal is available to be	
11	unmuted?	
12	As I received a message from	
13	Ms. Mohammed, Mr. Betchkal is not available,	
14	so we will now move on to the next speaker.	
15	May I have Mr. Michael Baxter	
16	unmuted? Mr. Baxter?	
17	MR. BAXTER: Yes, good evening.	
18	Can you hear me?	
19	MS. NEWMAN: Yes, I can hear you.	
20	Please state your name and who you are	
21	representing for the record, and you may	
22	begin your comment.	
23	MR. BAXTER: Thank you. And thank	
24	you for giving me this opportunity. I am	

Michael Baxter. I live at 38460 Cottage

Lane, directly across Cottage Lane from the

applicant's property. I'm representing

myself and my wife, who also is a co-owner of
the house.

There are many speakers.

Ms. Forman had covered the pertinent points.

I will only cover several points that were
not touched upon, although I will adopt by
reference the comments of Ms. Forman.

The context here is that this is the second try, the second application, the first of which was not approved. And if you look at the two plans side by side, they are only modestly different.

The floating dock concept, which inspired comments and the opposition on the basis of its danger to the wildlife and the animals and the fish and the turtles in the area, remains through the floating dock in a two or three-foot deep section of Cottage Lane.

I would question whether a gangplank over top of the easement area is

not in interference with it. It doesn't have to be in the water to interfere with the function and intent of an easement. And I would suggest that it does.

And fundamentally, the dock is not the smallest dock in the lake as constructed. It extends 21 feet into the lake. Why, it's not clear to me other than for either aesthetic purposes or recreational purposes.

But the dock, for example, on the opposite side of the lake where the Cottage Lane townhouses are extends only 15 feet into the lake. So it would not be the smallest dock. And none of the docks were built after the lake was placed in the conservation easement.

So I would just respectfully suggest -- and I'm going to say I am disappointed to have to be in disagreement with a new neighbor -- but this dock is wrong for this lake, if you call it that -- it's a pond -- and it is most definitely wrong for the smallest, narrowest part of the pond.

I have been told that regulations

30 1 only permit a dock to extend 10 percent of 2 the width of the lake. And I see the applicant has listed the width at his dock 3 proposed location is 130 feet. That seems 4 generous. But even at that, 10 percent would 5 be 13 feet, and it exceeds it. 6 I would respectfully request that 7 8 this dock as submitted be denied, and that if a dock with the appropriate limitations in 9 10 size and dimensions of construction is 11 submitted, I would be happy to see one 12 installed, but this does not. MS. NEWMAN: Thank you, Mr. Baxter. 13 Next is David Jasinski. 14 MR. JASINSKI: Hi. My name is Dave 15 Jasinski. I live at 133 Chesapeake Street 16 17 immediately adjacent to the property 18 requesting the new floating dock. I had concerns when the dock was 19 initially requested, and I still have corners 20 21 with the modified application. 22 I don't agree that this dock, as 23 designed, should be approved. 24 First I would like to clarify that,

quote, Lake Comegys is really a small pond.

It is very shallow. And in many places its

depth is measured in inches, not feet. The

photo extends to the bottom.

It's just four acres in size and one-tenth the size of nearby Silver Lake.

Yet, this small body of water is bordered by approximately 49 homes and townhomes.

A large dock sticking over 20 feet into this pond is too large in scale and would be disastrous if replicated by multiple homeowners.

The requestor specified a lesser projection in his testimony just now, but that is not reflected in the drawings submitted.

DNREC can't assume the lesser projection, because the submitted drawings simply don't show that lesser projection he talked about in his testimony today.

The Singers have requested a floating dock but have provided no depth measurements where the dock will reside. I checked the nearby location, and 10 feet out

from the shoreline, the depth was just 6 to 8 inches.

Lake Comegys is home to wildlife, including many turtles, some quite large with shell diameters of 12 to 18 inches. During hot, dry spells in the summer, the pond gets even shallower. These turtles may gravitate to the shady locations such as under the, quote, floating dock.

With such shallow depths, how can we know the turtles won't get injured when people step upon the floating dock and its section moves?

And the proposed dock goes 20 feet into the pond; and, yet, further application for the pond is only 130 feet across. The 20 feet is much larger than the few existing, preexisting docks that typically hug the shoreline.

If a dock is to be approved, it should hug the shoreline, be small in scale, and it should be fixed, not floating.

And then there is the issue of the existing conservation easements. The

application does not specify how the gangway can be installed without being considered a structure placed upon the easement.

Since the easement does not allow any kind of a new structure, I'm not sure how a new gangway can either be placed upon or over the easement.

The drawings submitted don't address this. The easement specifies that new uses that affect wildlife are not allowed. A floating dock and a very shallow pond is inconsistent with protecting the turtles that make Lake Comegys their home.

Forty-nine homes and townhomes adjoin the small pond. Most don't have a dock, and none have docks of 20-foot projections.

If DNREC approves this application, there will be numerous additional docks of similar size requested. This will have a very negative impact on Lake Comegys as well as the protected wildlife, given the very small size of this body of water.

Thank you.

34 1 MS. NEWMAN: Thank you, 2 Mr. Jasinski. We will now have Tony Burns, please, unmuted. Mr. Burns, please state 3 your name for the record and if you're 4 representing any company, and you may begin 5 6 your comments. MR. BURNS: I am Tony Burns, the 7 8 president of the Lake Comegys Association of Homeowners, representing our 28 homeowners 9 10 who share over 600 feet of shoreline on Lake 11 Comegys. 12 I want to correct the record. 13 are not a condominium. We are 28 individual 14 homeowners. Mr. Singer, in asking for a public 15 hearing, does not appear to have addressed 16 17 any of the legal and environmental concerns 18 raised initially in connection with his original application and, in particular, the 19 questions raised by the Save Our Lakes 20 Alliance, of which our association is a 21 charter member. 22 23 His floating dock that would extend

out over 20 feet in the narrowest side of the

24

lake would come to within a little over 100 feet of our association shoreline.

As we noted in our submission to your office on June 16, 2020, Lake Comegys is not a recreational lake. It is owned by the state.

Further, the General Assembly on May 13th of 2004 passed a resolution recognizing Silver Lake and Lake Comegys as state and national treasures, being the closest freshwater lakes in the nation in proximity to the Atlantic Ocean.

In 2007, the state established that 35-foot conservation easement around the lake shoreline to assure that the shoreline would be retained forever in its natural scenic and open condition, with grandfathering in for certain properties.

There have been no docks built on Lake Comegys since the Assembly resolution and the state designation of a conservation easement.

Our association has one small dock parallel and adjacent to the shoreline for 25

36 1 years to serve our 28 homeowners, but particularly for those homeowners that are 2 over 400 feet from the lake. 3 Mr. Singer's home is set back no 4 more than 20 feet from the shoreline, and 5 until recently he had lawn chairs in the area 6 overlooking the lake. 7 8 His proposed dock would extend out from this area, over the bulkhead wall, into 9 10 the lake. This project appears to be an 11 expansion of the owner's outdoor space into 12 state-owned public areas for no other reasons than for private use. 13 This does not provide a legal basis 14 for use of public lands. And approval of 15 this application would ignore Delaware 16 17 legislative recognition of the significance 18

of Lake Comegys as well as the purpose of and the restrictions placed on the shoreline by conservation easement.

MS. NEWMAN: Thank you, Mr. Burns, for your comment. Next, we will have Rick Hardy. Mr. Hardy?

> MR. HARDY: Hello.

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MS. NEWMAN: Thank you. Please state your name for the record and who you are representing, and then you may begin your comment.

MR. HARDY: Sure. My name is Rick Hardy, and I'm a resident at 105 Chesapeake towards the front of the lake and representing myself for my partner.

Thank you guys for taking the opportunity here for public hearing, public comments. I think sometimes this is often missed.

And I think, as I'm just sitting here looking over the lake and the number of years -- we've been here over 20 years -- and the times that -- the number of times that people have said they have no environmental impact when they are building new houses, tearing down trees, um, whatever they may be, filling in the lake at their particular pieces of property.

It definitely has an impact. And I think we right now don't understand what would be the impact of having such a large

floating dock on this lake. Mr. Singer said it was the smallest dock, and that is absolutely not true.

I think we definitely need to have some oversight to make sure, you know, anything that is built on the lake is within the standards.

I think the other thing, and it's been mentioned before, is precedent. If he is given the opportunity to use so much of the lake, what does that mean for everyone else around the lake? And there are many homeowners around the lake. So I think if the State is considering that, they have to take that into account.

Um, yeah, like I said, over the years we have seen many, many impacts from the new homes built.

And I think, in particular, this property at one point took down trees in the easement, cleared bushes in the easement, so a lot of people have said they want to protect the easement, but they don't.

And I think this is where DNREC has

39 1 a responsibility, I think, to really ensure the protection of all of these lakes. 2 And I am definitely opposed to 3 building of a floating dock this size. 4 I'm not opposed to a dock, but it 5 should be within a structure stated by the 6 government standards, I think. 7 8 Yeah, I think most of my comments, most of my thoughts have already been said or 9 10 mentioned, but I would definitely oppose the 11 approval of a permit to building a dock of 12 this nature. 13 MS. NEWMAN: Thank you, Mr. Hardy. 14 Next we have Peggy Eddens. MS. EDDENS: Hi. Good evening. 15 This is Peggy Eddens, and I'm speaking for my 16 17 husband, Greg. And we live at 38470 Cottage 18 Lane as well as a few others who spoke before 19 us. 20 Thank you all for the time this evening. We really do appreciate it. Lake 21 Comegys is an ecological preserve. It is 22 23 home to herons and bald eagles, several 24 species of ducks and turtles, and lots of

fish.

If this project is approved, it will set precedent for future structures and, before we know it, you know, floating piers and floating gangplanks and docks, you know, before we know it, our environmental treasure as we have today will be compromised, and we will, in effect, you know, evict those who live here today. They will need to find sanctuary somewhere, if anywhere. You know, design and construction intentions don't dictate the impact or the aftermath of their actions.

Our state's herons and turtles, eagles and ducks all will be forced out as this structure and others that are proposed disrupt the peace and calm of the lake, which is their home.

We love our state, and we love the lake. And we love even more what it offers and provides to our nature community.

If the herons, birds, ducks, turtles, and geese had a voice, they could ask themselves to save this lake and not to

permit this project to go forward and to save their home.

We are guardians of the environment around us, and we are speaking for them as well as for all of us who really treasure what we have in Lake Comegys.

This is a glacial lake that has survived many, many years, which is why it's so protected.

On our watch at this time in our history, I would hate to think that we stood by quietly and watched hundreds of years of history and preservation efforts erode before our eyes and erased for future generations.

We really do appreciate you giving us the opportunity to speak this evening and for respecting our comments and plea.

We are very grateful for all the work that DNREC does for our community.

And on behalf of all of those who share our community, as well as those who do not have a voice, I would appreciate your time and service and wish you all a very good evening.

42 1 Thank you very much. 2 MS. NEWMAN: Thank you. Ms. Eddens, before you go, I just wanted to 3 confirm in the beginning of your comment you 4 stated that you were speaking on behalf of 5 Greg Eddens, your husband. We do have him on 6 to speak next. Is he going to still speak, 7 8 or did you provide a comment for the both of 9 you? 10 MS. EDDENS: I will let him answer that for you. You know, he registered and --11 12 MR. EDDENS: No. My wife spoke for 13 both of us. That's fine. Thank you. 14 MS. NEWMAN: Okay. Great. Thank you. All right. Lastly, we have Mr. Michael 15 Boyd. Please state your name for the record 16 17 and who you are representing, and then you 18 may begin your comment. MR. BOYD: Oh, thank you. My name 19 20 is Michael Boyd. I'm representing myself. 21 Can you hear me okay? Because I'm on a 22 phone. 23 MS. NEWMAN: I can, yes. MR. BOYD: Okay. I live at 121 24

Chesapeake Street in the Sea Haven

Condominiums, Unit 5, which is right on the,

you know, by the lake.

I really didn't make a formal set of comments to make tonight. I found out about this just a few days ago. And I wanted to hear and possibly react to what I did hear.

And I wholeheartedly endorse all the comments from my neighbors about the sensitivity of the ecosystem. We do have a very precious wildlife population in Lake Comegys.

It's been noted we have ospreys fishing there. We have green herons, blue herons, egrets, kingfishers, and all the usual song birds and ducks and migrating birds. It's really a wonderful habitat.

And I have -- I'm sure that one more dock alone wouldn't destroy the habitat, but the pressing argument is what really concerns me. I would like to think that the DNREC wildlife biologists and lake ecologists would weigh in on what the potential of

44 1 numerous additional docks could do to harm this valuable ecosystem. 2 Full disclosure: I was until a few 3 years ago on the board of SOLA. I'm, you 4 know, vitally concerned about the health of 5 that lake. And I'm a very close friend of 6 Ms. Forman. And I totally appreciate the 7 8 comments that SOLA made tonight. So that's really all I have to say. Thank you. 9 10 MS. NEWMAN: Thank you, Mr. Boyd. 11 So that will conclude the public 12 comment portion of tonight's hearing. I want to thank you all for your comments. And, 13 again, if you weren't able to provide your 14 full comment at tonight's hearing, you are 15 able to provide a written comment no later 16 17 than Thursday, July 1, 2021, to which the 18 hearing record will remain open through. Thank you all for attending the 19 virtual hearing. The hearing is now 20 concluded at 6:46 p.m. 21 22 (Concluded at 6:46 p.m.) 23 24

		45
1	CERTIFICATE	
2		
3	I HEREBY CERTIFY that the	
4	witness was duly sworn by me and that the	
5	deposition is a true record of the testimony	
6	given by the witness.	
7		
8	100110	
9	Manage Washing	
10	July Harries	
11		
12	Lorena J. Hartnett	
13	Registered Professional Reporter	
14	Dated: June 22, 2021	
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19	of this transcript does not apply to any reproduction of the same by any means, unless	
20	under the direct control and/or supervision of the certifying reporter.)	
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